

NEWS: More EU participation needed in JPA, say MEPs

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Brussels, 18 November 2011/ ACP Newsdesk: Members of the European Parliament have called for more active involvement from the European Council and Parliament at this week's joint assembly with the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group.

On Wednesday 16 November the European Parliament approved the 2010 annual report on the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, submitted by rapporteur, Polish centre-right MEP Filip Kaczmarek (pictured). In the debates leading up to the vote, MEPs underlined the importance of the JPA as a unique and "indispensable" forum to exchange views between Europe and its partners in the ACP region.

([Watch BBC Democracy Live recording of the debate](#) ^[1])

Several members criticised the lack of representation from the European Council at last year's assembly in Kinshasa, amongst them JPA Vice Chair, Luxembourg democratic MEP Charles Goerens.

Meanwhile, Belgian Green MEP Isabelle Durant, and Spain's Miguel Angel Mat3n3z Mart3n3z of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats stressed the need for more powers to be given to the JPA, especially in overseeing budget issues.

Discussions highlighted the ACP Group's potential as a political partner, as well as the need for more attention from EU parliamentarians to ACP-EU issues covered in the JPAs.

EU Commissioner Andris Piebalgs reiterated the Commission's commitment to attending JPA meetings.

"I am convinced that strengthening the political nature of JPA and its oversight functions as reflected in the second revision of the Cotonou Agreement signed in 2010 is of paramount importance. Not only will it ensure that the Agreement functions democratically, more importantly, it will also usher in renewed and more effective interaction between the joint institutions, namely the Joint Council and the Joint Parliamentary Assembly," he stated.

Mr Piebalgs added that with the second Cotonou revision, the JPA will be able to "fully exercise powers of democratic scrutiny" by discussing and commenting on the ACP-EU Council of Ministers annual report, as well as allowing more parliamentary oversight on EPA and EDF strategic papers. –END

(Picture: MEP Filip Kaczmarek/ Screengrab - BBC Democracy Live)

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